

Town Council Committee on Outreach, Appointments, and Communications [OCA]

Process to appoint members to multiple-member bodies appointed by the Town Council

Charter Sec. 2.9(c)

Charter Sec. 5.5(b)

Draft 10-31-2019

 **Choice of options**

 **Key differences between options**

 **New idea not yet discussed by OCA**

1. Vacancy

When a vacancy or impending vacancy occurs on a multiple-member body appointed by the Town Council (including Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and non-voting resident members of the Finance Committee), the Chair of OCA shall write and submit to the Town Clerk for publication on the Town Bulletin Board a vacancy notice, in accordance with Charter Sec. 9.12(e). A vacancy occurs whenever a member resigns from the body. An impending vacancy occurs whenever a member intends to resign or a member's term is expiring, regardless of whether that member may be reappointed.

2. Community Activity Forms (CAF)

Individuals interested in serving on the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, or as a non-voting resident member of the Finance Committee shall fill out a CAF to express their interest in service. The CAF for these three bodies is separate from the CAFs for Town Manager-appointed multiple-member bodies and is automatically distributed to all Councilors.

CAFs are personnel records, not public documents, and therefore cannot be shared or distributed by Councilors.

3. Sufficiency of the applicant pool

In accordance with Charter Sec. 9.12(e), the vacancy notice must be published on the Town Bulletin Board for a period not less than 14 days, any time after which OCA may assess the sufficiency of the applicant pool. OCA shall collate all CAFs submitted over the preceding two years. The OCA Chair shall contact any applicant who submitted their CAF greater than 6 months prior to confirm continued interest.

OCA shall use the collection of CAFs submitted over the preceding two years for which applicants are currently interested to assess the sufficiency of the applicant pool. In making a determination, OCA may consider the following factors:

- The number of applicants relative to the number of vacancies or impending vacancies. OCA should strive for more applicants than vacancies.
- The demographic diversity of the applicant pool. OCA should strive for a diverse applicant pool, including racial, economic, gender, and generational diversity.
- The current needs of the body-to-be-appointed, including any current burdens placed on the body by a vacancy.

OPTION A: No threshold

OCA does not maintain any threshold requirements of the applicant pool to declare it sufficient, and may proceed to interviews despite few applicants or low diversity as OCA deems appropriate. OCA assesses the applicant pool holistically in the context of the needs and history of the body-to-be-appointed.

OPTION B: Threshold

OCA shall not declare the applicant pool to sufficient, and may not proceed to interviews, unless there are more applicants than vacancies or impending vacancies, or if OCA determines the pool is insufficiently diverse. OCA assesses the applicant pool holistically in the context of the needs and history of the body-to-be-appointed.

OCA may, by majority vote, declare the applicant pool sufficient to proceed to interviews. Absent this declaration, OCA may engage in outreach to recruit additional applicants. OCA does not disclose the total number of applicants to the public or to the press.

4. Selection guidance

Prior to developing interview questions or holding interviews, OCA shall, by majority vote, adopt selection guidance for filling the vacancy to be provided to the Town Council in advance of interviews. Selection guidance shall be derived from the following two sources:

A. Criteria for a healthy multiple-member body

OCA considers the following factors to be important for a multiple-member body to be healthy:

- a. A strong base of seasoned members who have completed or nearly completed one term as member. These members bring an understanding of process, institutional knowledge, can mentor new members, and take on leadership roles.
- b. Newer members who have served fewer than one term. These members bring new energy, outlooks, and ideas to the body, and ensure the body will continue to have a strong base of seasoned members in the future.
- c. A preference for reappointment of a person completing their first term. If a person is completing their second term, and there are other qualified applicants, preference is given to a newcomer. However, in cases where special training or expertise is required longer periods of service beyond two terms may be appropriate.

B. Input from the body's chair

Prior to the adoption of selection guidance, the OCA Chair shall solicit from the chair of the body-to-be-appointed the following:

- a. Skills and characteristics of a successful member of that body.
- b. Knowledge and/or expertise related to the work of that body.
- c. Preferred knowledge and/or expertise to meet the current needs of that body.

5. Interview questions

Prior to holding interviews, OCA shall, by majority vote, adopt a set of interview questions to be asked of all applicants. OCA should consider the adopted selection guidance in developing interview questions. OCA may also solicit questions from the Town Council in advance and attempt to include them.

6. Interviews

In advance of interviews, the OCA Chair shall distribute to the Town Council and to all interviewees the adopted selection guidance, interview questions, and committee handouts.

OPTION A: OCA Meeting: group interview, one day

The OCA Chair shall schedule and post a special OCA meeting at a time most convenient to all interviewees and provide at least 3 weeks notice of such meeting to all interviewees. The Town Council President, at their discretion, may also post the meeting as a special Town Council meeting. An interviewee may request to participate remotely. Any applicant unable to participate in the meeting shall not be considered for appointment. The meeting shall include the interviews as the sole agenda item, and shall not include public comment. The OCA Chair shall preside over the meeting.

All interviewees will be interviewed together as a group. Members of OCA will alternate asking the adopted interview questions of the group, and each interviewee will have an opportunity to answer each question. If the meeting is also posted as a special Town Council meeting, at the conclusion of the adopted interview questions the OCA Chair may, at their discretion, permit non-OCA Councilors in attendance to ask questions.

OPTION B: OCA Meeting: individual interviews, one day

The OCA Chair shall schedule and post a special OCA meeting at a time most convenient to all interviewees and provide at least 3 weeks notice of such meeting to all interviewees. The Town Council President, at their discretion, may also post the meeting as a special Town Council meeting. An interviewee may request to participate remotely. Any applicant unable to participate

in the meeting shall not be considered for appointment. The meeting shall include the interviews as the sole agenda item, and shall not include public comment. The OCA Chair shall preside over the meeting.

Each interviewee will be interviewed individually during a scheduled 20-minute time slot during the meeting. Members of OCA will alternate asking the adopted interview questions of the interviewee. If the meeting is also posted as a special Town Council meeting, at the conclusion of the adopted interview questions the OCA Chair may, at their discretion and with consideration of remaining time, permit non-OCA Councilors in attendance to ask questions.

OPTION C: OCA Meeting: individual interviews, multiple days

The OCA Chair shall schedule and post special OCA meetings at times most convenient to all interviewees and provide at least 3 weeks notice of the meetings to interviewees. The Town Council President, at their discretion, may also post the meetings as special Town Council meetings. An interviewee may request to participate remotely. Any applicant unable to participate in any of the meetings shall not be considered for appointment. The meetings shall include the interviews as the sole agenda item, and shall not include public comment. The OCA Chair shall preside over the meetings.

Each interviewee will be interviewed individually during a scheduled 20-minute time slot during a meeting. Members of OCA will alternate asking the adopted interview questions of the interviewee. If the meeting is also posted as a special Town Council meeting, at the conclusion of the adopted interview questions the OCA Chair may, at their discretion and with consideration of remaining time, permit non-OCA Councilors in attendance to ask questions.

OPTIONS D/E: Special Town Council Meeting: group interview/individual interviews, one day

At the request of the OCA Chair, the Town Council President shall schedule and post a special meeting of the Town Council at a time most convenient to all interviewees and provide at least 3 weeks notice of such meeting to all interviewees. An interviewee may request to participate remotely. Any applicant unable to participate in the meeting shall not be considered for appointment. The meeting shall include the interviews as the sole agenda item, and shall not include public comment. The Town Council President shall preside over the meeting.

All interviewees will be interviewed together as a group/Each interviewee will be interviewed individually during a scheduled 20-minute time slot during the meeting. Members of the Town Council may ask questions of the group/of the interviewees, and each interviewee will have an opportunity to answer each question. The Town Council President shall ensure that all interview questions adopted by OCA are asked.

7. OCA recommendation

At the next OCA meeting following the conclusion of interviews OCA shall discuss the applicants and make a recommendation to the Town Council. The recommendation may include any of the following:

- Name(s) of applicant(s) recommended for appointment
- Dates of appointment
- Reasons for recommendation

OCA may choose not to make a recommendation. OCA may also recommend fewer appointments than vacancies or impending vacancies, or may recommend leaving a vacancy temporarily.

8. Town Council vote

Upon receipt of OCA's recommendation, the Town Council may vote to appoint. Appointment is approved by a majority vote of the Town Council. CAFs remain personnel records and shall not be brought into consideration during the Town Council deliberation.

Alternate language if Section 7. "OCA recommendation" is rejected:

At the next regular Town Council meeting following the conclusion of interviews, the Town Council shall discuss the applicants and vote to appoint. Any Councilor may make a motion to appoint any applicant. Appointment is approved by a majority vote of the Town Council. The Town Council may make fewer appointments than vacancies or impending vacancies, or may vote to leave a vacancy temporarily. CAFs remain personnel records and shall not be brought into consideration during the Town Council deliberation.